
SPECIAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 27th September, 2022

Present:	Councillor Josh Allen (in the Chair), Councillors Noordad Aziz, Susan Hayes (Vice Chair), Zak Khan and Kate Walsh
In Attendance:	Councillors Kate Walsh and Marlene Haworth
Apologies	Melissa Fisher

123 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

There were apologies for absence from Councillor Melissa Fisher. Councillor Bernard Dawson substituted.

124 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

The Chair, Councillor Josh Allen, declared a personal interest in Item 6 – Town Centre Events on account of his membership of ACE. He indicated that to avoid any potential conflicts of interest, he would not take part in this item.

125 Minutes of the last Meeting

The Chair indicated that this was the first meeting of the Special Scrutiny Committee, there were no previous minutes to approve.

126 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

The Chair invited Ben Caulfield, Scrutiny and Policy Officer to present this item.

Ben referred to the recommendations of the report, informing the committee that it was their role to approve their own work programme only, as indicated in section 2.3 of the report.

He informed the group that the programme was created with consultation with all Service Heads and Councillors. Members of the public also had an opportunity to put forward suggestions, and the Chairs of the Committees met together with Cabinet members to seek their priorities going forward.

Ben indicated that due to the very specific remit of this committee, specific meeting dates had not yet been scheduled as the Committee needed to be reactive as progress was made with Levelling up bids etc.

Councillor Noordad Aziz asked if the Committee had a terms of reference. Ben informed the Committee that the terms of reference were set at the Council's AGM in May 2022.

Councillor Aziz asked the Committee to consider adding Investment Zones to the work programme and suggested this could perhaps be reviewed around November 2022. The Committee agreed that this item would fit their remit.

Resolved - That the Special Scrutiny Committee approves its work programme for 2022/23 as outlined in the report with the addition of Investment Zones.

127 Nomination of Co-optees

The Chair invited Ben Caulfield, Scrutiny and Policy Officer to present this report.

Ben referred to the recommendations of the report, indicating the Committee that it was their role to nominate potential co-optees for the committee, but ultimately it was a Council decision to appoint them.

The report recommended that the Committee nominates Shaheed Mahmood and an individual young person from Ynot Aspire as co-optees to the Special Scrutiny Committee.

Co-optees are members of the public, and their role is to add value to the committee. They have the same rights as normal members except for voting rights.

The Chair indicated that he was keen for a young person to be co-opted on to the committee to bring a fresh outlook to scrutiny.

The Committee were supportive of both nominations.

Resolved - That the Special Scrutiny Committee recommends to Council the appointment of Shaheed Mahmood and an individual from Ynot Aspire be appointed as co-optees until the end of the 2023/24 municipal year.

128 Town Centre Events

The Chair indicated that due to the personal interest he had declared and any potential conflict of interest arising from this, he would leave the meeting at this point. The Vice Chair, Susan Hayes took over as Chair of the meeting.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Marlene Haworth and Victoria Tindall to present the item.

Victoria presented the report and spoke in detail on the thorough application process for funding and events. Applications are assessed against 4 primary objectives:

- Increase visitors to the town centre (increase footfall)
- Engage with people who live in and around Hyndburn
- Create an event which can engage with the widest possible audience
- Demonstrate value for money and maximise the event outcomes

Victoria informed the Committee that both she and the portfolio holder have spent time looking at other area events and researching them for best practice, which she will use to help develop events in Hyndburn.

Cllr Marlene Haworth indicated that there was a capacity issue. Some Councils have Town Teams which support the organisation of events, with others having a larger team of officers. The Council's current team is Victoria plus an Events Coordinator, who supported over 100 event applications right through the ESAG process, which is resource intensive. Victoria agreed, indicating that there is much more she would like to do in terms of research and evaluation if capacity allowed.

Councillor Zak Khan said it seemed from the report that there was a clear preference for larger scale events with big pull factors rather than smaller events, and he supported this. However, he did indicate that he would like to see a more robust evaluation of the events funded through the Council to get a clearer picture of what works and what does not. He also said he hoped the process of funding large events would be a catalyst for smaller events to pop up on their own without the need for Council funding. He also indicated that the list of event organisers seemed to be the same group of organisations over and over and suggested more could be done to encourage other groups or organisations to apply for events funding.

Councillor Kate Walsh agreed with the need for more robust evaluation of events including customer feedback, and suggested the possibility of working with local education providers to work on evaluations.

Councillor Noordad Aziz said a simple measure of asking people if they had a positive experience at strategic points around the town would also provide vital feedback.

Victoria thanked members for their comments. She said that the Council's ambition is for Accrington Town Centre to become a destination, where people will visit because they know there is always something going on.

Resolved - That the Committee makes the following recommendations to Cabinet:

- **Cabinet considers providing additional resources to the Events Team to increase their capacity and ability to support events further.**
- **Cabinet requests that the Portfolio Holder work with the Events Team to come up with ways to improve data collection and the evaluation of events funded by the Council**
- **Cabinet requests that the Portfolio Holder make contact with local colleges/education providers to support the above recommendation**

129 Accrington Town Centre Parking

The Chair invited the Scrutiny and Policy Officer to present the report on Accrington Town Centre Parking.

It was reported that the Lancashire County Council were invited to report to the Committee but had been unable to attend. However, the Portfolio Holder for Highways at Lancashire County Council had said he would respond to any questions from the Committee and consider any suggestions they may have for improvements to town centre parking.

The Scrutiny and Policy Officer said the report was a simple document of information relating to the parking spaces available, both on and off street, in Accrington Town Centre and the time restrictions associated with these. Dave Turner, Engineer at Hyndburn Borough Council with responsibility for off street parking attended the meeting and provided some context.

The current parking arrangements in Accrington Town Centre were introduced when the town centre was developed. Lancashire County Council initially put these in place for approximately 2 years and had stated that these would then be reviewed. He did not believe a review had been carried out.

The Chair of the meeting indicated that he found parking arrangements in the town centre confusing, and residents had reflected these views to him. Residents had reported that it

put them off using the Town Centre. The Chairs view was that there should be a consistent time restriction across all parking spaces of 3 hours.

Committee members had mixed views on current arrangements. Councillor Aziz said that although he could see the benefit of a single time restriction, some businesses relied short term parking where a customer can quickly drop in and then move on, freeing up parking for other customers to use. He also said there was a danger if parking restrictions were removed fully that all town centre spaces would end up being taken by those working in the town centre and not those shopping or visiting local businesses. He thought no changes should be made to current arrangements without first consulting with local businesses.

Cllr Walsh suggested a permit scheme be made available whereby town centre workers can park in certain areas for the full day.

Cllr Khan said any review should consider increasing the amount of disabled parking spaces available in the immediate town centre.

Cllr Dawson asked if a review had been carried out on the flow of traffic in the town centre, as this should also be considered if parking was to be reviewed. The Committee agreed.

The Committee agreed that the Chair should write to Lancashire County Council and request that a review of parking and traffic flow in Accrington Town Centre be carried out at the earliest opportunity, ensuring that local businesses are consulted as part of the review.

Dave Turner referred to an anomaly with off street parking that is car parks owned by Hyndburn Borough Council. Currently, all these car parks are available for all day parking with the exception of two (Cross Street and Abbey Street). These car parks have a Traffic Regulation Order for 3 hour parking. As Hyndburn Borough Council do not have a parking enforcement service, parking here is enforced by Ribble Valley Council at a cost to Hyndburn. Due to the costs associated, enforcement only happens on a very limited schedule. This can be confusing to users of the car parks and has no real benefit to the Council.

The Committee agreed and supported the removal of the Traffic Regulation Order on these car parks, which would create consistency across all Hyndburn Council owned car parks in Accrington Town Centre.

The Committee thanked Dave Turner for attending and offering advice to the Committee.

Resolved -

That the Chair of the Committee writes to the Portfolio Holder for Highways at Lancashire County Council, requesting:

- **A review of parking and traffic flow in Accrington Town Centre is carried out at the earliest opportunity**
- **That the review includes consultation with local businesses to ensure their views are reflected in any changes made**
- **That as part of the review, consideration be given to the views of members of this committee contained in the minutes of this meeting.**

That the Traffic Regulation Order limiting parking to 3 hours on the car parks off Cross Street and Abbey Street be removed, bringing the car parks in line with other Hyndburn Borough Council owned car parks.

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed